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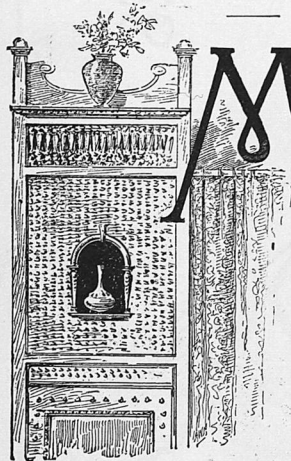
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THE HOUSE

A REMODELLED HALL ENTRANCE.



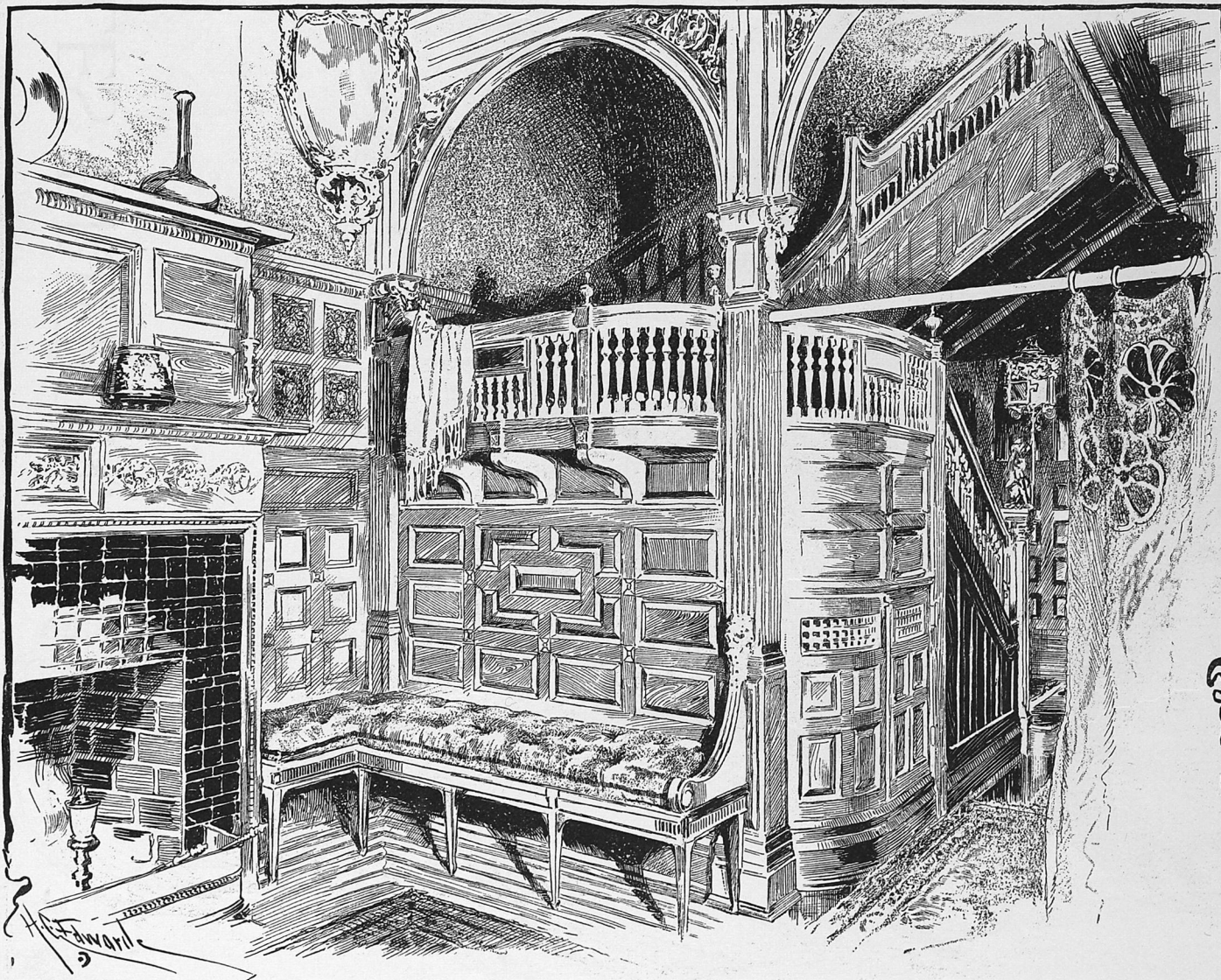
MOST architects of reputation every now and then receive an order to transform the lower story of one of our ugly and inconvenient city houses into something like what is shown in our illustration of a "Hall and Staircase." And if people were aware of how easily it can be done there would be still more orders of that sort. As a rule, in one of our city houses, you take three steps from the vestibule to the foot of the stairs. To right or left, as it may happen, are the folding-doors of the "front parlor," into which the visitor must incontinently turn, whether he is an intimate friend or an utter stranger. For before him opens a narrow passage, with a door at the end of it, it is true, opening into the "back parlor," but which is used only to pass through when going down the gloomy back stairs to dinner. In many city houses we have, of late, changed all that. It is really very little trouble to do

so. The alterations can all be made while the family is away for the summer. It is only necessary to take down the wall and door that separates the back of the staircase from the "back parlor." It is replaced, in the case before us, by a light arcade of two arches supported by a fluted pillar. One of these arches is about half filled by the panelled back of the staircase, replacing the lath and plaster partition which has been removed. The panelling is carried round the corner, into the hall, and masks the lower stairs, to which access is gained by a door, not as plainly shown as it might be in our drawing. The artist, however, has been careful to show that the lower stairs are lit through glass bull's-eyes inserted in one of the panels. It is evident that more light may be had by increasing the number of glass panels. A portière, hung across a stout curtain rod, takes the place of the former door, and, being half open, invites one into the new room which has been made out of the old "back parlor." This is a central hall, having nearly the position and the functions of the Roman atrium. It is a convenient place from which to reach any other part of the house. Consequently, it is more often used for the purposes of a parlor and of a common sitting-room than either of the old parlors were likely to be. As a rule both of these were practically "company rooms," seldom or never used by members of the family on ordinary occasions. But the new hall, more easy of access and more familiar-looking usually becomes the recognized meeting ground of the family. A lift may connect it with the kitchen, in which case it may be used as a dining-room. But, in New York, it is more

common to build an extension to the rear which contains the dining-room. In new houses the central hall is sometimes carried up for two or more stories, which gives it a very noble appearance when the other dimensions are large in proportion. In remodelled houses this is inadvisable. To turn to the special features of our design. The space over the stair back, in the inner arch, is often filled with Egyptian or Japanese lattice work. We prefer it open, as shown, protected simply by a balustrade. The wood-work would look very well in quartered oak, cherry or even southern pine. A high panelled dado is usually carried all around the hall. Above it, the wall is commonly painted in distemper with some shade of Pompeian red or salmon color, and the same is used for the wall of the staircase. A broad frieze, stencilled in tones of dark blue and green, may be added. The same colors should prevail in the portière, and the tiling of the fireplace should contrast with the warm colors of the walls and wood-work. The chimney corner, as will be seen, may be made very cosy and attractive with cushioned seats, lamps and sconces of burnished metal, and a row of carios on the mantel-shelf. The floor should be covered by a rug; and there may be a large centre table in the middle of the room.

HINTS ABOUT BUYING FURNITURE.

We have several times taken occasion to point to the strong and handsome forms of old English furniture as offering desirable models to modern furniture-makers. In drawing-room furniture of the last century this



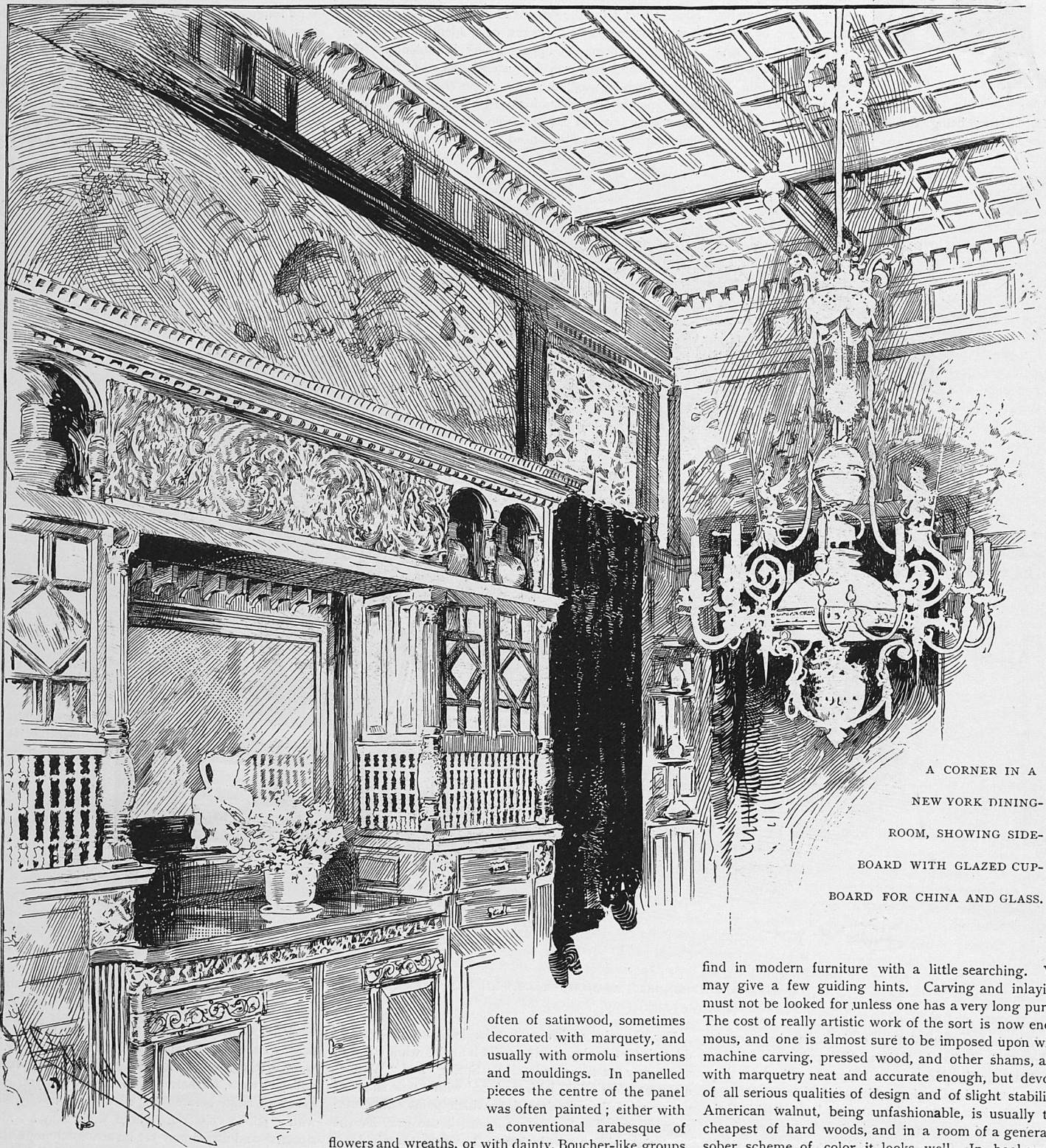
HALL AND STAIRCASE IN A NEW YORK HOUSE.

solidity was often combined with a remarkable degree of elegance. What is generally called, by the dealers, "Queen Anne" furniture embraces a wide variety of styles and tastes, and, in fact, much that is in reality Victorian. In this there is, of necessity, much that is ugly and clumsy, sought for only because it is old-fashioned and, such of it as is in good order, well made. The style or rather styles that we have reference to are those which show the influence of Thomas Chippendale, who published his book of designs in 1754, and of Thomas

English, and were to many people more pleasing than that of the originals whence they were derived.

The Chippendale chairs offer a very comfortable broad seat, with a back well cushioned or caned for the shoulders, and slanting at an easy angle. Less movable articles, such as cabinets, were more richly decorated, and, though often of English make, were perhaps oftener imported. While mahogany, with or without brass mountings, was in favor for tables, chairs and bureaus, drawing-room cabinets and other show pieces were as

though light frame of solid mahogany, were very elegant affairs, especially when supplied with richly covered movable cushions. Some of his specialties were tables with movable legs and top divided so that they might be readily convertible from oblong to square or triangular, and vice versa card tables which fitted into one another, so as to be out of the way when not needed, and the like. The mechanism of these articles is as simple as it is ingenious, and such as not easily to get out of order. Some of these good qualities it is possible to



A CORNER IN A
NEW YORK DINING-
ROOM, SHOWING SIDE-
BOARD WITH GLAZED CUP-
BOARD FOR CHINA AND GLASS.

often of satinwood, sometimes decorated with marquetry, and usually with ormolu insertions and mouldings. In panelled pieces the centre of the panel was often painted; either with a conventional arabesque of

flowers and wreaths, or with dainty, Boucher-like groups of figures or picturesque landscapes. The workmanship even of the most delicate of these pieces, especially when of English make, is very good, and while they are far more elegant than modern drawing-room furniture of the sort, they are also, it is needless to say, more substantial.

Sheraton was cleverer and more ingenious than his predecessor, and he, perhaps, sinned less often against good taste. He was particularly fertile in mechanical expedients, and his work, while less bulky than Chippendale's, was quite as well put together. His comfortable sofas, with wide seats and slanting backs, with as many as eight well-made straight legs, supporting a strong

find in modern furniture with a little searching. W. may give a few guiding hints. Carving and inlaying must not be looked for unless one has a very long purse. The cost of really artistic work of the sort is now enormous, and one is almost sure to be imposed upon with machine carving, pressed wood, and other shams, and with marquetry neat and accurate enough, but devoid of all serious qualities of design and of slight stability. American walnut, being unfashionable, is usually the cheapest of hard woods, and in a room of a generally sober scheme of color it looks well. In bookcases, cupboards, desks and bureaus the tendency is still with us to overdo the Eastlake principle of showing construction. Ornament, indeed, often simulates construction, and we have elaborately wrought hinges, clamps and other brass or iron-work, which have no functions other than those of mere ornament to perform. The result is not only ugly and costly, but it is the most meretricious kind of a sham. A great deal may be done in furniture, as well as in permanent interior fittings, with the openwork panels imported in quantities from Japan, Egypt and India. For cupboard and cabinet doors, backed with bright-colored silk curtains, or for screens, nothing can be more desirable.

Sheraton, whose designs for cabinet-makers were published in 1791. Even of these we would by no means recommend that exact copies should be made. As has already been pointed out in *The Art Amateur*, Sheraton and Chippendale designs often show traces of badly harmonized Gothic, rococo and Chinese ornament mingled together in very questionable taste. But in many cases they were inspired by the best continental work of the period; which designs simplified, cleared of unnecessary detail, and with the constructive lines well established, gained a new character which may fairly be called

TAPESTRY PAINTING.



screen, Winter being especially suitable for such a purpose. Among other uses the set could be adapted

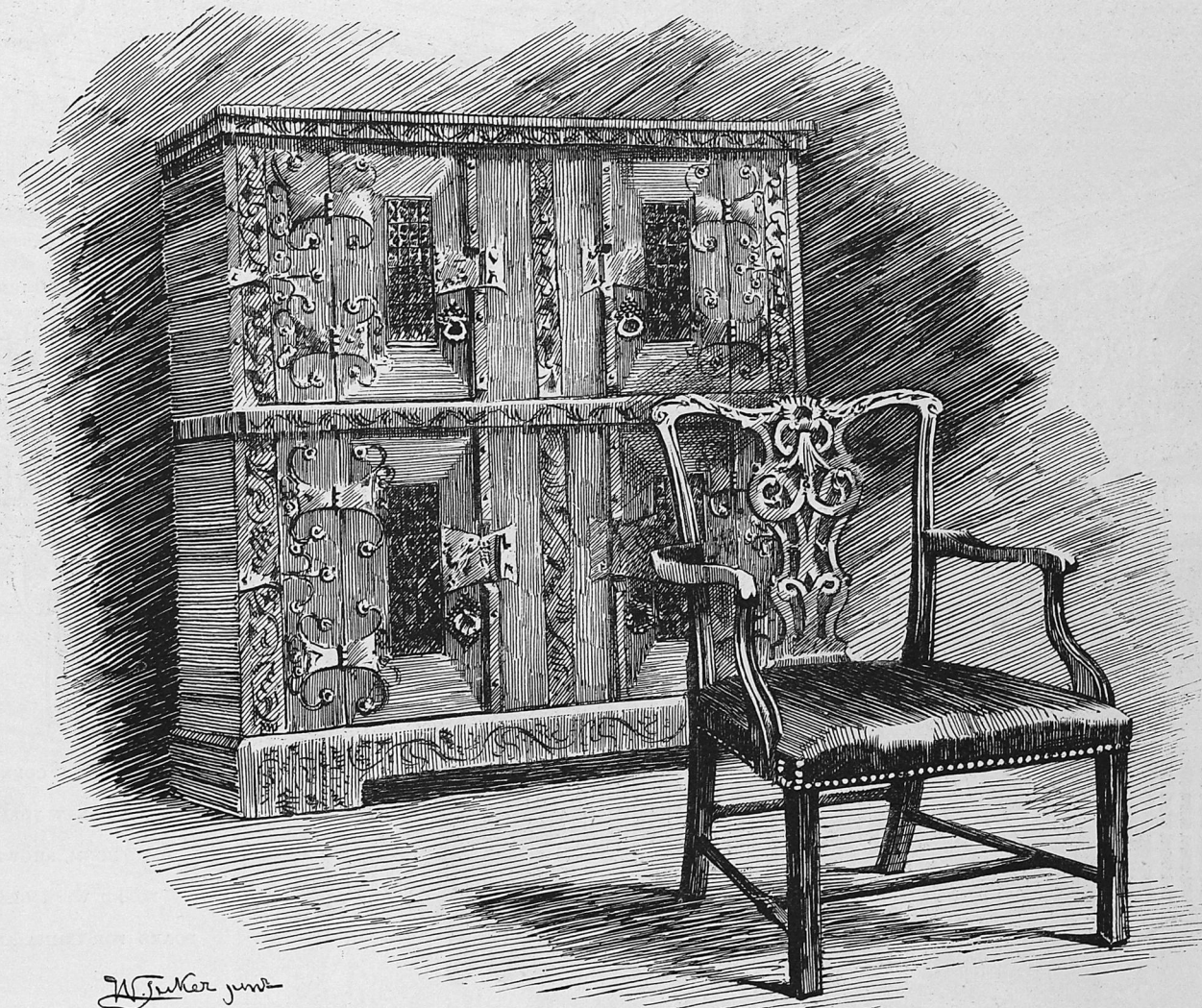
HE series of four plates descriptive of "The Seasons," after Boucher, is completed in this number, Spring and Summer having been given in the last issue. Although belonging to a series, there is no reason why any of the plates should not be used separately. Enlarged to the proper size, each could be used singly for a fire

medium and a little water. The medium should be used with all the colors. After the local tint has been scrubbed in so that the canvas is thoroughly soaked, and is still wet, paint into the shadows a bright grass green, made by mixing indigo and yellow, remembering always to shake the indigo before using. By this method of painting into the red its complementary color, most beautiful transparent shadows are obtainable. The hair may now be put in. For different shades of golden hair, take brown mixed with yellow for the shadows or a mixture of indigo, sanguine and yellow. For the local tint take yellow with a very little ponceau added; this gives the desired tawny shade. By diluting it more or less, either a flaxen or golden brown can be obtained. When the first painting is undeniably dry the flesh and hair can be accentuated with the same colors already used, the high lights being taken out with a pen-knife. Hints for using the knife with proper effect were given in our last number under "Tapestry Painting Notes," so they need not be repeated here.

ART AT HOME.

VI.—PICTURES (CONTINUED).

AS to the formation of a picture gallery on a small scale a good deal might be said, but it would resolve itself almost all into the one maxim, "Please yourself." The object of having unpleasant or doleful or ugly pictures I have never been able to find out, and I cannot conceive why artists should paint them. Once upon a time representations of the sufferings and deaths of martyrs were part of the decoration of every church, but they were painted not to give pleasure, but to excite religious emotion. It thus comes to pass that in every public gallery there are fine pictures by great artists which I, for one, should be sorry to hang on a wall in my house. They are useful as 'contributions toward the history of art, and it is quite right that they should be preserved where their method may be studied and the skill of the artist admired. It is, in fact, for instruction that a great collection like that in our London



A CHIPPENDALE ARM-CHAIR AND AN OLD GERMAN LINEN PRESS.

for chairs in tapestry painting, each picture being set in a framework similar in style to that published in *The Art Amateur* for November, 1889. In this case they would not need enlarging. To paint them, procure a piece of the best fine wool canvas and paint with Gré-*nie's* dyes and medium, now obtainable at most of the principal stores for art materials. Some very small tapestry brushes will be needed for marking in the features, hands and feet. Although full directions for flesh painting in tapestry have been frequently given in our columns, many of our new subscribers may be glad to have them repeated.

First, with the finest brush obtainable, mark in all the features, and with a larger brush put in the broad shadows at the same time. Do this with two shades of sanguine, following the drawing very carefully, the outline of which should have been previously pounced on canvas, tightly and evenly stretched in a wooden frame. When the work is dry put in the local flesh tint with the palest possible shade of sanguine, diluted with

For the sky and clouds take indigo blue, greatly diluted, for the clear parts; paint into this while still wet some gray for the clouds. In "Spring" and "Winter" a sunset effect might be introduced with a pale shade of yellow toward the horizon, into which paint either rose or ponceau. For the gray stonework use gray for the local tint, adding a little brown to warm the shadows and introducing some very delicate bright rainbow tints blending into each other. Lay in the foliage and sheaves of wheat first with flat washes of the lightest tint; when these are dry work up the detail. The fire and smoke in "Winter" must be first painted in with a pale tint of yellow, blotting in some ponceau before it is dry. Use sanguine and deeper shades of yellow separately for the glowing flame, and for the smoke take brown and gray. Paint the drapery in "Autumn" yellow; in "Winter" pale blue; in "Spring" a very delicate mauve or salmon pink. When finished the paintings must be properly steamed; this process is necessary in order to render the dyes permanent.

National Gallery has been formed and exists; but the private collector has wholly different ends in view. You want, first, perhaps, to make a good and safe investment, and you want, furthermore, to have what you can admire and enjoy before your eyes. It is wholly different with a public collection, where what may be most instructive and useful may yet be absolutely repulsive.

I am glad to say that our National Gallery contains very few of these unpleasant paintings, although it is marvellously representative, and boasts of specimens of a great many different schools and styles. To my eyes a beautiful picture is unceasingly pleasant, and when I am in London I never fail to pay at least a weekly visit to the National Gallery. I generally look at only two or three pictures at each visit. Sometimes it is the Turner water-colors—I care for very few of his oil paintings, though "Crossing the Brook" is the best landscape we have; sometimes it is the two *Madonnas*: first, that known as the *Suffolk* *Lionardo*, of which a version, slightly different and not in such good preser-

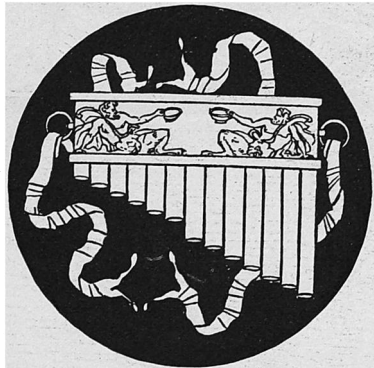
vation, is in the Louvre; and then the noble Ansidei Raphael, a picture which fills the eye, so to speak, being complete and faultless to a degree unapproached by anything else in the gallery. For color, composition, drawing, beauty and, besides, preservation, this is beyond praise. The Lionardo, beautiful as it is, wants color; but the loveliness of the faces, especially of that of the angel, is divine. Again, for color, some of the pictures of the Venetian school are capable of giving direct pleasure. What sweet music is to those fortunate people who have the requisite ear these pictures are to me. There is "St. Jerome in his Cell" and the "Adoration of a Knight," both probably by the same unknown hand; and the so-called portrait of "Ariosto" and the "Venus and Adonis," all anonymous pictures, but all full of the same glowing harmonious color. Few people fail to enjoy the sight of a fine sunset; but these pictures may, at least I think so, be equally enjoyed and thrill the mind of any one who looks at them. Besides these great Italian works there are two or three Van Eycks, and some other pictures, as, for instance, the "Magdalen Reading," which came from Northern schools, and which in their simple scale of harmonious coloring and their exquisite finish are very delightful. I do not mean to say there are not hundreds of charming pictures in the gallery besides these, but I have just picked them out as those I remember when at a distance with the greatest affection. Now, if pictures like these in a public collection, which can only be visited on stated occasions, and for a short time, and where there is not a single easy-chair, can produce such emotion as I have endeavored not so much to describe as to name and mention, what pleasure may we not derive from being the actual owners of a work of the highest art. To some readers what I say on this subject may seem to be absolute nonsense. But to those who have the love of art in them it will be sober, earnest, "eternal verity." "I felt," said a friend who had bought a beautiful landscape—"I felt as if I had bought an estate." He looks at his landscape as if he was visiting some pleasant park that belonged to him.

When, therefore, I venture to counsel a collector to choose for his house pictures that are capable of giving pleasure, I counsel what can seldom be done. I suppose somebody enjoys pictures like those of Joseph Israels or of his English imitator, the late Frank Holl, but such melancholy scenes, such gloom and unrelieved shade, such sad monotony of color, convey only a disagreeable impression, and instead of paying a large sum to have the privilege of hanging them in my room, I should prefer to look at bare wall paper.

The contemporary artist, both here and in France, and I presume also in America, thinks little or nothing of composition. In, say, a landscape he has carried realism to a marvellous pitch. You can see the clouds flushing up in a sunset, or the water sparkling over the pebbles, and the light flashing through the green leaves. This is all very well; it is, at any rate, better than colored photography; but it partakes of the nature of that great invention. I like what is called an original sketch, especially a sketch of some place I admire; but art should be able to do something more than this. If we tried the landscapes in our great annual shows by the standards of Claude or of Turner not one-tenth part of the number would obtain admission. When this sort of thing is done with such skill as that shown by, say, Mr. Brett or Mr. Hook I can admire it a little; but I cannot go so far as to tell what would be an untruth and say it is art. You might as well call the house painter who "grains" a panel so that you cannot

distinguish it from maple an artist and his work a picture. I want something more, and I greatly regret to say I fail to find it among modern artists, with very few exceptions.

So far, I fear my remarks on the choice of subjects and artists have been of a negative character. Let me try and state positively what I want in a picture. We may, for argument's sake, assume that an artist's drawing and perspective and his touch or brush work are all correct; but to make a picture, not a mere transcript or sketch from nature, but a picture, there must be composition first. In landscape composition is almost everything, since the color, the light and shade and the treatment or sentiment are prescribed by the choice of subject. In figure pictures it is hardly so important, yet how much a little of it helps a story! I can only think of three members of our Royal Academy who systematically study it; and there is no landscape paint-



MOTIVE FOR DECORATION. "PAN PIPES."

er among them, though of one it may be said that he shows signs that he is aware of his own deficiencies in this respect.

Next let us take harmony of coloring. Unfortunately, perhaps, for myself, I am hurt by discordant coloring, the more so as I see little else. I am unwilling to mention the names of living artists; but among what were called the "pictures of the year," last summer in London, I only saw two, both small and inconsiderable, which were not absolutely "out of tune" to my eyes—positively discordant, and about as pleasant as a barrel organ or the tooth-ache. The ignorance of the principles of coloring which prevails among so-called artists is perfectly astonishing; yet some of the stiff, quaint old saints of an illuminated manuscript or a "gold ground" in the early rooms of the National Gallery are redeemed by their harmonious tints, and are preferable to ninety-nine out of a hundred modern pictures. Some artists take refuge among the tertiaries, and so avoid very glaring false concords, but a great majority are mere experimenters, and much more often fail than succeed; while nearly all fall into the common error of thinking that brilliant coloring is to be obtained by the use of bright colors, just as our architects think that to make a building ornamental it must be covered with ornament.

Thirdly, we should have sentiment in a picture. By sentiment I do not mean poetry only, or anything more than a certain amount of meaning. That is why I am not content with a mere transcript from nature. Here is a picture by Mr. Robert Bateman: a dark green bank of pine trees, through the topmost branches of which a little light struggles; dark green grass of the same tint, with some white weeds dimly seen; in the foreground,

partly concealed in the long grass, the figure of a knight in armor lying dead, and in one of the trees a black raven. Here is another by Miss Kate Greenaway: two lovers, the girl in white, the man in dark purple, the grass freckled with daisies, an almond-tree in blossom behind and a gold sky with a big yellow moon in it. Here is a landscape by Mr. John Tenniel: a deep green background of old trees against a sunset sky, and in the twilight an Irishman driving home his pig. These are examples of different kinds, but all have a certain effect, and are pleasant to look at, because the composition is devoted to telling the story, such as it is; because the coloring is harmonious to the highest degree and because the sentiment, tragedy, melodrama or comedy is clear.

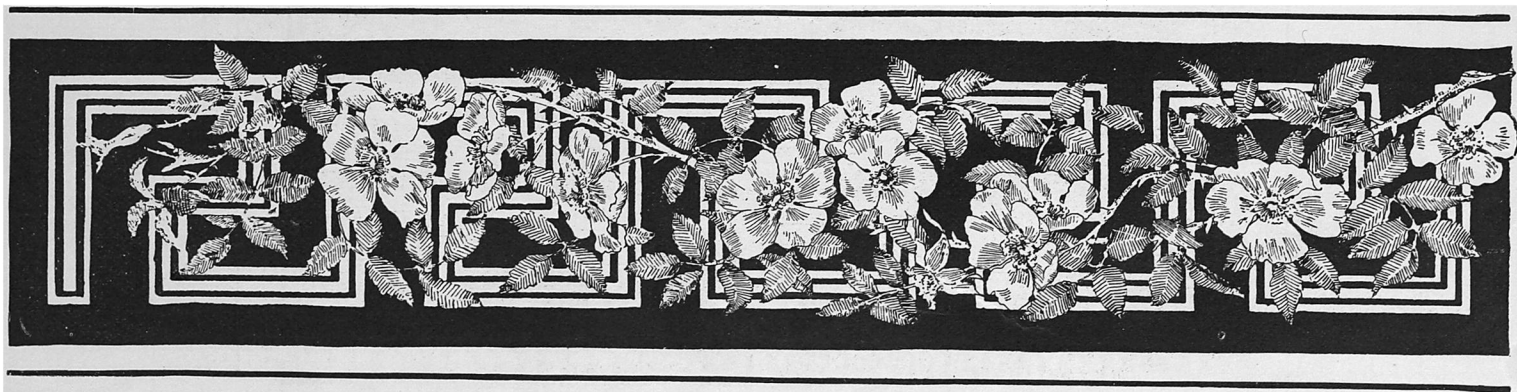
This matter of sentiment is more important than appears at first sight, and our modern artists fail in it quite as much as in composition and coloring. When you buy a picture take care that you are not taken by the title. A good picture does not require a title. It should tell its own story. It should neither be dependent on a showman, like a panorama, nor require a poetical quotation to eke out an imperfectly painted scene. Some of Landseer's are too much of this character, but we can forgive a great deal to the artist of "Alexander and Diogenes." But his best work is independent of title. "Jack in Office," "Uncle Tom and his Wife," "The Children of the Mist" and "Dignity and Impudence" tell their own tale, and though we are glad to have the titles, we could do quite as well without them. This is especially the case with Landseer's masterpiece. Here is a Scotch colley, or sheep dog, leaning sadly over a coffin on which a shepherd's plaid is partly spread; near it is an old Bible and a pair of horn spectacles; the background is a room of a small Highland cottage. The picture represents "The Shepherd's Chief Mourner" and does not need a title to tell us so. It can represent nothing else.

As to the hanging of pictures a great deal might be written. They are admirably hung now in the National Gallery; but overcrowding used to make many of them unintelligible, and will probably do so again. In some old Dutch pictures we have a gallery represented, and there the pictures are hung close to each other, no care apparently being taken to obtain any effect of balance or any avoidance of violent contrast in color or subject. The late Mr. Gillott's pictures were hung in this fashion in rooms specially built for them; but in that case the rooms existed for the pictures, not the pictures for the rooms. Where pictures are used to enhance the decoration of a room, it is quite another thing. There is a beautiful design in the "Vitruvius Britannicus," by Lord Burlington, for a gallery of sculpture and painting; but here a row of niches is alternated with a row of panels. The statues would have had to be all of the same proportions and the pictures of the same size and shape.

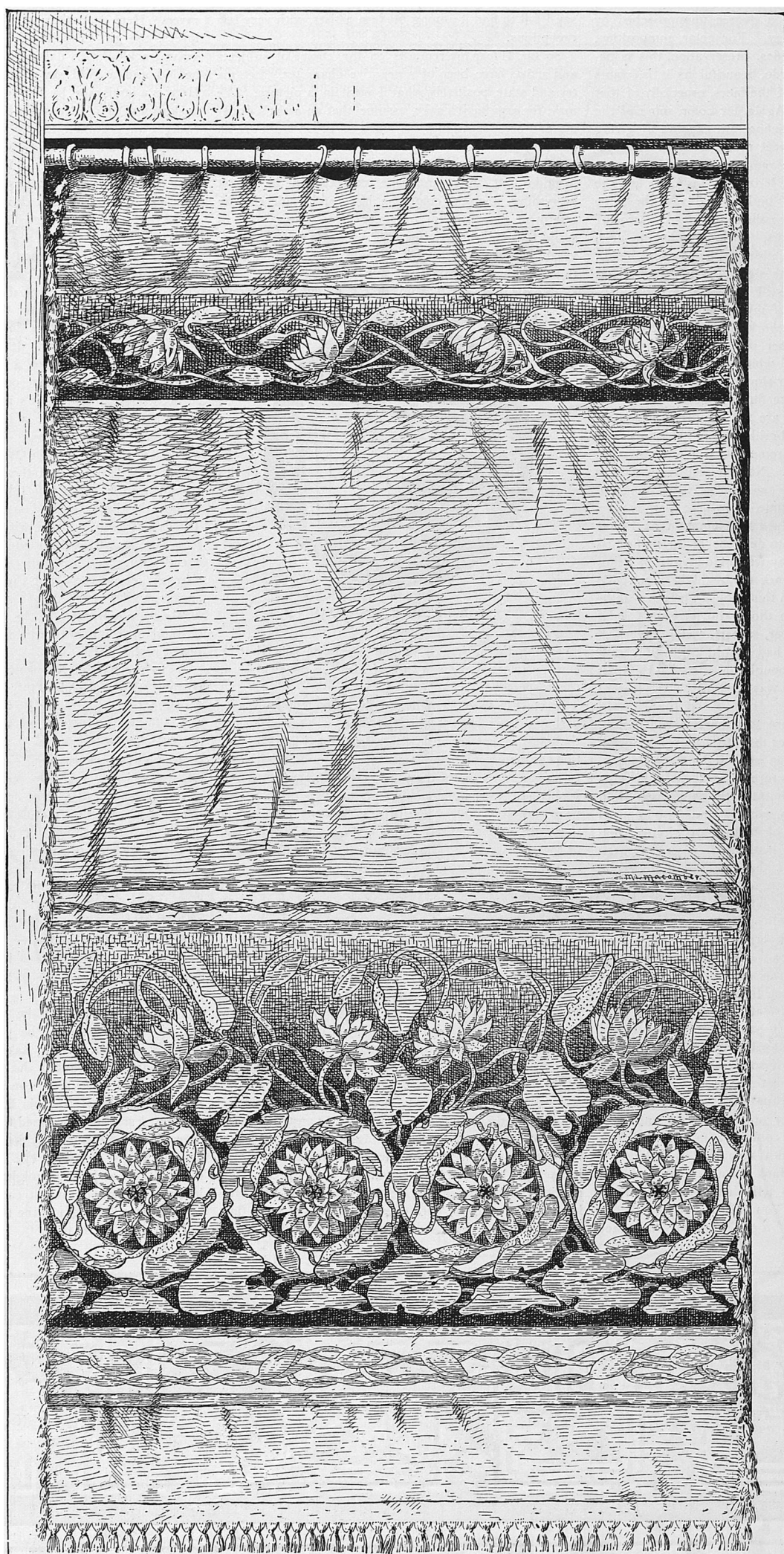
For an ordinary room the chief thing to think of is that the pictures should be placed where they can be properly seen, care being taken at the same time that they do not interfere with the other arrangements of the room, or with its furniture and decorations. If there is a better and more suitable light on one wall than on another, I should be inclined to take all possible advantage of it, and dispose my best pictures in a row, at a suitable height above the eye. But some special favorite or a new acquisition might well stand on an easel, in such a position that it can be seen from, say, the most comfortable sofa in the room.

LONDON, Oct. 1, 1890.

W. J. LOFTIE.



DECORATIVE BORDER FOR PAINTING OR EMBROIDERY. DESIGNED BY THOMAS TRYON.



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